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Diana T Fritz 03/15/2007 02:22:54 PM From DB/Inbox: Search Results

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Text:

UNCLASSIFIED

SIPDIS  
TELEGRAM

May 11, 2004

To: No Action Addressee  
Action: Unknown  
From: AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI (ABU DHABI 1508 - UNKNOWN)  
TAGS: OIIP, KMDR  
Captions: None  
Subject: PUBLIC REACTION TO ABUSE OF IRAQI PRISONERS  
Ref: None

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UNCLAS ABU DHABI 01508

SIPDIS  
CXABU:  
ACTION: PAO  
INFO: ECON POL AMB DCM  
Laser1:  
ACTION: PAO

DISSEMINATION: PAO  
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: PAO:HOLSIN-WINDECKER  
DRAFTED: PAO:AHOSHAN  
CLEARED: PAO:HOLSIN\_WINDECKER

VZCZCADI870  
OO RUEHC RUENAAA RUEKJCS RUEHZM RUEHLO RUEHFR  
RHRMDAB RUCJACC RUCQSOC  
DE RUEHAD #1508 1320409  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
O 110409Z MAY 04  
FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4302  
RUENAAA/SECNAV WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RUEHZM/GCC COLLECTIVE  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0797  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0833  
RHRMDAB/COMUSNAVCENT  
RUCJACC/USCINCCENT MACDILL AFB FL//CCPA//  
RUCQSOC/USCINCSOC MACDILL AFB FL//PA//

UNCLAS ABU DHABI 001508

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARP; NEA/PPD; NEA/RA; INR/R/MR; PA;  
INR/NESA; INR/B; IIP/G/NEA-SA  
WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE; NSC  
SECDEF FOR OASD/PA  
USCINCCENT FOR POLAD  
LONDON FOR GOLDRICH; PARIS FOR ZEYA  
LONDON PASS TO MOC  
E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [OIIP](#) [KMDR](#) [TC](#)  
SUBJECT: PUBLIC REACTION TO ABUSE OF IRAQI PRISONERS

11. SUMMARY: NEGATIVE AND VEHEMENT PUBLIC REACTION TO PHOTOS AND  
REPORTS OF IRAQI PRISONER ABUSE CONTINUED. EVER SINCE IT HIT

THE PRESS, THE ISSUE HAS BEEN DOMINATING LOCAL AND REGIONAL MEDIA AS WELL AS PUBLIC OPINION IN THE UAE. CONTACTS COMMISERATE THAT PUBLIC DIPLOMACY EFFORTS HAVE BECOME NEXT TO IMPOSSIBLE BECAUSE THE PHOTOS GAVE EXTREMISTS ADDITIONAL AMMUNITION TO CRITICIZE THE U.S. A SENIOR CONTACT NOTED THAT THE GOOD SIDE OF THE STORY REVEALS THAT THERE ARE GOOD-HEARTED AND CONSCIENTIOUS PEOPLE INVOLVED WITH THE ISSUE. END SUMMARY.

12. A UAE EDITOR OF A MILITARY MAGAZINE WHO HAD PREVIOUSLY SET AN APPOINTMENT WITH THE INFORMATION SPECIALIST TO DISCUSS SCHEDULING AN INTERVIEW WITH CENTCOM COMMANDER IN CHIEF SAID: "DO YOU THINK I CAN STILL COME AND TALK ABOUT NORMAL BUSINESS IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES?... THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE PHOTOS WOULD MAKE YOUR JOB EXTREMELY HARD SIMPLY BECAUSE EVERYONE IS TALKING ABOUT THEM. THE PHOTOS MAKE EXCELLENT AMMUNITION FOR THE EXTREMISTS IN THEIR OFFENSIVES AGAINST THE U.S."

13. AN ARAB MEDIA CONTACT NOTED: "THE REPETITIVE AIRING OF THE PHOTOS ON REGIONAL SATELLITE CHANNELS WOULD FOIL ANY PUBLIC DIPLOMACY ATTEMPTS OF THE U.S. IN THE REGION. HOW COULD THE U.S. TALK ABOUT RESPECT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME IS DOING THE CONTRARY IN IRAQ? THE PHOTOS GAVE EXTREMISTS AN UPPER HAND IN THE PUBLIC AND IN THE MEDIA, EVEN THOSE WHO STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT THE ACTS ARE DONE BY FEW SOLDIERS, WHILE THE MAJORITY ARE DOING A GOOD JOB FOR IRAQIS, CANNOT SAY SO SIMPLY BECAUSE THEY WOULD BE BASHED AT STRONGLY BY THE MAINSTREAM. THE SOLDIERS WHO ARE IN CHARGE OF THE PRISON BELIEVED THAT IRAQIS ARE VERY TOUGH, HOSTILE AND BACKWARD PEOPLE WHO DESERVE SUCH A TREATMENT. IT WAS NOT THEIR MISTAKE BUT OF THEIR COMMANDERS. ALTHOUGH THE ABUSES WERE MADE BY HANDFUL OF PEOPLE IT TRULY REFLECTS THE MENTALITY OF SENIOR AMERICAN COMMANDERS IN THE PENTAGON."

15. A SENIOR MINISTRY OF INFORMATION OFFICIAL SAID: "ALTHOUGH THE PICTURES ARE TERRIBLE AND DISGUSTING, YET, WE HAVE TO LOOK AT THE POSITIVE SIDE OF THE WHOLE ISSUE: THERE ARE STILL PEOPLE WHO ARE CONSCIENTIOUS AND GOOD-HEARTED. THE FACT PEOPLE HERE MUST REALIZE, IS, THAT WITHOUT THE HELP OF THOSE PEOPLE, THE ENTIRE STORY OF PRISONER ABUSE WOULD HAVE REMAINED UNTOLD."

16. AN ATTORNEY, A CONTACT OF THE POLITICAL SECTION, WHO IS ACTIV IN SUPPORTING HUMAN RIGHTS, HAD SOME VERY STRONG VIEWS. HE SAID THAT EVERYONE KNOWS THAT, WHILE SIMILAR ACTIVITIES WERE DONE UNDER SADDAM'S REGIME, IT DOES NOT EXECUSE THE U.S. FOR DOING THE SAME. HE SAID THAT THE U.S. "WENT TOO FAR" WITH THIS, AND THAT THIS, ALONG WITH THE FALLUJAH SIEGE, IS "CHANGING MINDS AND CREATING VERY BAD FEELINGS TOWARDS THE U.S." HE ADDED: "BUSH IS PLAYING INTO THE HANDS OF FUNDAMENTALIST MUSLIMS." HE ADDED THAT PEOPLE WHO OPPOSED U.S. POLICIES IN IRAQ BEFORE ARE USING THE PHOTOS TO REFUEL THEIR STATEMENTS AND "WIDEN THE GULF". MANY PEOPLE HERE BELIEVE THAT THE ABUSE IS PROBABLY WIDESPREAD AND NOT "ISOLATED INCIDENTS." WHILE THE PHOTOS ARE BEING PORTRAYED AS INDIVIDUAL INCIDENTS BY THE MEDIA, MANY "RATIONAL PEOPLE" (MEANING, NOT CONSPIRACY THEORISTS OR OTHERS WITH AN ANTI-U.S. AX TO GRIND) BELIEVE THAT SOON IT WILL COME OUT THAT THIS WAY OF TREATING PRISONERS WAS STANDARD U.S. POLICY.

ALBRIGHT